

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6074
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 10437

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: SGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: CONSTITUTION/ELECTIONS TIMETABLE UPDATE

REF: MADRID 9217

1. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION BY THE
SENATE'S CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE ACCELERATED RAPIDLY
IN RECENT DAYS, AND THE COMMITTEE SHOULD COMPLETE ITS
WORK THIS WEEK. THE ONLY TOUGH ISSUE REMAINING IS
THE AUTONOMY QUESTION, AND NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN UCD
(SENATE PRESIDENT FONTAN AND SENATE WHIP JIMENEZ BLANCO)
AND THE PNV (PRINCIPALLY SENATOR MIGUEL UNZUETA) ARE
CONTINUING. FONTAN HAS PREDICTED PUBLICLY THAT SENATE
PLENARY SESSIONS ON THE DOCUMENT SHOULD BEGIN ABOUT
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SEPTEMBER 20, AND SHOULD WIND UP BY THE END OF THE
MONTH.

2. THOSE ARTICLES OF THE DOCUMENT THAT HAVE BEEN
ALTERED SUBSTANTIVELY IN THE SENATE WILL THEN BE REFERRED
TO THE CORTES' MIXED COMMITTEE, WHICH CONSISTS OF ELEVEN
MEMBERS (FOUR DEPUTIES, FOUR SENATORS, THE PRESIDENTS

OF THE CONGRESS AND THE SENATE, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES). FONTAN TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE GOVT EXPECTS NO PROBLEMS IN MIXED COMMITTEE, SINCE SIX OF THE ELEVEN MEMBERS ARE UCD PARLIAMENTARIANS. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FUNCTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS THE RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES, AND THAT IT CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES INTRODUCE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN THE TEXT. WHEN MIXED COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS ARE COMPLETED, THE DOCUMENT WILL THEN BE RETURNED TO BOTH CHAMBERS FOR A FINAL VOTE, WITHOUT DEBATE.

3. BECAUSE OF THE TIME REQUIRED FOR TECHNICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM, NOT TO MENTION WHAT IS CERTAIN TO BE A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BY THE GOVT AND MOST OF THE PARTIES BOTH TO GET OUT THE VOTE AND TO SECURE A RESOUNDING "YES" AT THE POLLS, THE LIKELY DATE FOR THE REFERENDUM HAS NOW SLIPPED TO MID-NOVEMBER.

4. THE RECENTLY APPROVED MUNICIPAL ELECTION LAW PROVIDES THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MUST BE CONVOKED BY THE GOVT WITHIN 30 DAYS OF PROMULGATION OF THE APPROVED CONSTITUTION, AND MUST TAKE PLACE WITHIN 65 DAYS OF CONVOCAION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE MAXIMUM TIME FRAME BETWEEN PROMULGATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE MUNICIPALS WOULD BE SOME 95 DAYS. AT LUNCH WITH AMBASSADOR AUGUST 31 UCD ELECTIONS SEC GEN MANUEL NUNEZ PROJECTED MUNICIPALS FOR LATE
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FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH.

5. LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, OF COURSE, DO NOT HAVE TO BE HELD UNTIL 1981, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD TAKE PLACE ANY TIME AFTER THE CONSTITUTION IS APPROVED, INCLUDING SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH OR THEORETICALLY EVEN BEFORE MUNICIPALS. SPECULATION THAT LEGISLATIVES MIGHT BE CONVOKED EARLY IN 1979 HAS HEATED UP AS SPANIARDS RETURNED FROM THE BEACHES IN AUGUST, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE NO SOLID BASIS FOR SUCH RUMORS. POLLS CONTINUE TO SHOW THE PSOE LEADING UCD, BUT UCD LEADERS DISCOUNT SUCH PROJECTIONS, BELIEVING THAT SPANIARDS WILL VOTE MORE CONSERVATIVELY THAN THEY RESPOND TO POLLS AND THAT THE PARTY CONGRESS, THE CONSTITUTION AND THE IMPROVING ECONOMIC SITUATION WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A UCD VICTORY IF NATIONAL ELECTIONS WERE TO BE CONVOKED (SEE AMBASSADOR'S MEMCON WITH UCD COORDINATOR ARIAS SALGADO, ET AL., OF SEPTEMBER 1). IN ANY EVENT, IT IS A DECISION THAT RESTS WITH SUAREZ, AND HE IS NOT TALKING. WE BELIEVE HE CONTINUES TO CONSIDER HIS OPTIONS. BARBOUR

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